

Amendment to the Claims

The listing of claims, including the text of the claims, serves to replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for ~~[[the]]~~ a treatment of a fabric which comprises:

a heat and pressure application means,

a transport means for effecting relative movement between ~~[[a]]~~ the heat and pressure application means and the fabric, whereby ~~[[the]]~~ passage of the fabric through the apparatus results in ~~[[the]]~~ yarns substantially across ~~[[the]]~~ a width of the fabric being forced closer together, thus imparting semi-permanent ease or stretch ~~“ease” or “stretch”~~ into the fabrics,

an upstream fabric speed control means employed on an input side of the apparatus upstream of the transport means for maintaining a fabric input speed at the predetermined level, and

~~characterised in that~~ a downstream fabric speed control means ~~[[are]]~~ employed downstream of the transport means apparatus whereby to maintain the for maintaining a fabric output speed at a predetermined level,

wherein parameters of the throughput of the fabric through the upstream and downstream fabric speed control means and heat and pressure of the head and pressure application means are set to achieve a minimum desired fabric shrinkage consistent with a difference in speed between the upstream and downstream fabric speed control means such that the downstream fabric speed control means stretches any over shrunk fabric back to a desired fabric shrinkage.

2. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the downstream fabric speed control means comprises nip rollers.

3. (Original) An apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein the nip rollers are adapted to be driven at a constant speed.

4. (Cancelled).

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~4~~, where the upstream fabric speed control means comprises nip rollers.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1 ~~[[4]]~~, further comprising speed difference control means for controlling ~~[[the]]~~ a speed difference between the upstream and downstream fabric speed control means.

7. (Previously Presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising additional control means for detecting undershrinkage.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of treatment of a fabric comprising the steps of:

providing a heat and pressure application means;

providing a transport means for effecting relative movement between the heat and pressure application means and the fabric;

passing the fabric through upstream fabric speed control means to maintain a fabric input speed at a predetermined level;

providing the fabric to the transport means and thereby past the heat and pressure application means, resulting in ~~[[the]]~~ yarns substantially across ~~[[the]]~~ a width of the fabric being forced closer together, thus imparting semi-permanent ease or stretch ~~“ease” or “stretch”~~ into the fabric; and

passing the fabric through downstream fabric speed control means to maintain ~~[[the]]~~ a fabric output speed at a predetermined level;

wherein parameters of the throughput of the fabric through the upstream and downstream fabric speed control means and heat and pressure of the heat and pressure application means are set to achieve a minimum desired fabric shrinkage consistent with a difference in speed between the upstream and downstream fabric speed control means such that the downstream fabric speed control means stretches any over shrunk fabric back to a desired fabric shrinkage.

9. (Currently Amended) A method of treatment of fabrics as claimed in claim 8, ~~further comprising~~ wherein the step of passing the fabric through upstream fabric speed control means is performed to maintain the fabric input speed at a predetermined level prior to providing the fabric to the transport means.

10. (New) A method of treatment of fabric as claimed in claim 8, wherein at least one of the upstream and downstream fabric speed control means comprises nip rollers.

11. (New) A method of treatment of a fabric as claimed in claim 8, further including the step of controlling a difference in speed between the upstream and downstream fabric speed control means.

12. (New) A method of treatment of a fabric as claimed in claim 8, further including the step of detecting undershrinkage.